



News Release from Congressman **ROB SIMMONS**

SECOND DISTRICT, CONNECTICUT

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SIMMONS MEETS WITH CONNECTICUT'S DOCS

Lawmaker Calls On Congressional Leadership To Act On Medicare Payments To Physicians

NORWICH – Rep. Rob Simmons, R-2nd District, today met with doctors from the Connecticut State Medical Society (CSMS) to hear their concerns regarding planned Medicare payment cuts to physicians slated to take affect Jan. 1, 2007.

"This is an important issue, and one that I intend to bring to the attention of the House Leadership," Simmons said. "Congressional inaction could cost Connecticut nearly \$3 billion over the next several years and the loss of critical physician services for millions of Medicare patients in the region."

The proposed cuts are the result of a complicated formula developed by Congress in 1997 in an attempt to rein in Medicare spending. According to the members of the CSMS, payments to physicians in Connecticut would be cut an estimated \$49 million next year and nearly \$3 billion overall if Congress does not fix the formula.

For his part, Congressman Rob Simmons has been a strong supporter of reversing the proposed cuts and increasing Medicare physician payments by 2.8 percent. Simmons has also advocated replacing Medicare's flawed formula with one that reflects the true increases in physician practice costs. Both positions earned him praise from Connecticut's doctors.

Leading the meeting on behalf of Connecticut's doctors was Dr. Michael Deren, chairman of the Department of Surgery at Lawrence & Memorial Hospital and chairman of the Connecticut State Medical Society. Dr. Deren applauded Simmons for his past support of Connecticut's physicians and for his efforts on the Medicare reimbursement issue.

"CSMS is grateful for the efforts of Congressman Simmons in bringing the issue of Medicare physician payment cuts to the forefront of the healthcare debate in Congress, working to ensure those Medicare beneficiaries and active and retired military personnel and their families across the country and in Connecticut have access to quality medical care provided by dedicated and caring physicians," Dr. Deren said.

Simmons pledged to work with the congressional leadership on resolving this issue before Congress' expected adjournment in October.

"Part of my job is to listen to my constituents, and in this case I've always believed that the doctor knows best. And after listening to Dr. Deren and his colleagues, I believe these projected cuts will destabilize the Medicare program and put at risk all patient's access to health care. That's why, I will take this issue to the leaders in Congress on the behalf of Connecticut's doctors and the patients they serve and urge an immediate fix before we adjourn for the year."

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